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THE SOCIAL COALITIONAL CHARACTER OF THE  
DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN PRECINCT CADRES IN DETROIT, 1956-1984

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Political parties are alliances of socio-economic interest groups. One cannot understand party organizational dynamics in any community without identifying the critical coalitional subgroups of the organization, assessing their relative strengths, and analyzing their ideologies and behaviors. This is a position we elaborated long ago in our 1956 Detroit study of the Republican and Democratic hierarchies (Eldersveld 1964). The effectiveness of party structures in electoral democracies depends on their linkages to the significant socio-economic interest sectors of the electorates whose support they seek to exploit and mobilize in order to acquire, and to remain in, power. Hence, the viability of local party cadres depends greatly on their capacity for adaptation to the changing character of their electorates. By adaptation we mean not only their response in terms of the numerical representation of social interests in precinct cadres, but also the qualitative performance of precinct cadres, and their orientations to party politics, including their ideological commitments.

It is most interesting, therefore, to study the changes in party cadres over time, concurrently with observations concerning the social and populational changes in a community. Of course, the focus in this must be not only on the changing social complexion of the party coalitions, but on the relationship of such change to the mobilist role of the party structures--are they continuously effective, are they still relevant, or are they in a state of decline? To try to answer such questions for Detroit, the studies we have conducted from 1956 to the present are of some utility. Periodically we have returned to Detroit to interview a sample of precinct leaders of both major parties; most recently in the fall of 1980, 1982, and 1984. Therefore, we can compare Detroit party cadres of the 1950s and the 1980s--a 30-year perspective.

Detroit has changed significantly in the size and characteristics of its population since 1950 (see Table 1). It was then a city of almost two million. The decline has been continuous since then, dropping to a population of 1,200,000 by 1980, and estimated today to be close to one million. The racial composition has shifted from 16 percent black in 1950 to 63 percent in 1980. Its labor force has fallen, of course, by at least

a third, while at the same time unemployment has risen and the proportion of families surviving below the poverty level increased to almost 20 percent by 1980.

After 1980 employment conditions worsened. A 1983 planning department analysis reported a loss of 90,000 jobs 1979-1981 and unemployment for the 1981-1983 period was at 34 percent for blacks and 21 percent overall. Further, the proportion of all jobs that were in automobile manufacturing for the metropolitan area dropped from 22 percent in 1960 to 15 percent in 1980.

"Blue collar" employment is still over 50 percent of the labor force. The level of education increased considerably up to 1970. But Detroit may be one of the few cities to actually show a plateau in the level of high school education from 1970 to the present.

Table 1. Population Changes in Detroit, 1960-1980.

	1960	1970	1980
Total Population (in 000s)	1,670	1,511	1,202
% Change (over preceding census)	-9.7	-9.5	-20.0
Composition of Population			
Black	28.9	43.7	63.1
Median Family Income	6,069	10,038	17,033
% Families Below Poverty Level	NA	11.3	18.9
Total Employed			
Total Employed	612,295	561,184	394,707
% Blue Collar in Labor Force	57.0	58.8	53.6
% Unemployed	9.9	7.2	18.5
Educational Level			
Less Than 5 Years	9.3	7.2	5.0
High School Graduates	34.4	57.2	54.2
Median Years of Education	10.0	11.0	12.1
Religion			
% Protestant	50.9	49.9	
% Catholic	41.6	35.0	
% Jewish	1.8	1.5	
% No Preference	4.1	10.7	

Source: County and City Data Book, U.S. Bureau of the Census, and other census reports.

Behind these data is the real image of Detroit: flight to the suburbs, large areas of the inner city vacant and undeveloped, ramshackle housing, deteriorating neighborhoods, extreme poverty, homeless and hungry street people, crime, vandalism, squatter occupancy of homes, and violence. All this, despite the rebuilt riverfront and the Renaissance Center! While some improvement in economic conditions is now reported, the problems of the city continue. As a recent Detroit Free Press headline reminds us: "Recession Is Over, But Hunger Still Stalks City."

The relations between blacks and the remaining whites have deteriorated in this developmental context. The University of Michigan's Detroit Area Study (DAS) has reported a continual worsening of racial attitudes (see Table 2). And blacks view their neighborhoods negatively; based on a 1976 study, 34 percent reported feeling city services are inadequate; 36 percent say housing is dilapidated; 50 percent complain of crime and vandalism; and 32 percent criticize the quality of the schools (DAS "1976 Report to Respondents").

One must remember that the tragedy of Detroit is that in the 1960s and 1970s there was a major drive towards "liberation," reindustrialization and economic renaissance. When Jerome Kavanaugh defeated the establishment (and also the labor leaders by winning the mayoralty in 1961 he inaugurated a policy of opening the system to blacks (through appointments, the poverty programs, etc.). He worked closely (eventually) with organized labor to develop the city, throughout his mayoral term--to 1969. While the 1967 riots were a setback, along with "white flight," black power was enhanced. The blacks demanded change, recognition, power, governmental action (they were 44 percent of the population by 1970). By 1973 the blacks had their candidate for mayor, State Senator Coleman Young, who won after a bitter fight with Police Commissioner John Nichols. It has been argued that Young's operational strategy in the late 1970s was predicated on two basic approaches: 1) the pluralistic response to increasing citizen demands, and 2) close relationships with federal and state authorities in order to secure the requisite intergovernmental transfers to the city; that is, the funds necessary to provide the services demanded. The Detroit city charter was amended in 1974 to increase the mayor's power. Taxes were kept down. Outside funds provided the wherewithal. (Young's reelection slogan in 1978 was "He brings home the bacon!") This system and strategy collapsed in the 1979-1980 period because the recession in the auto industry, the cutback in state aid, and President Carter's shift away from intergovernmental aid, which was accentuated

after 1980. Thus the local economy was caught in desperate economic straits, while citizen demands continued. As a result Young revised his operational strategy--working closely with the economic elite, as well as with labor, the moderate reformers (not the radicals on the left), while maintaining good relations with black leaders. Despite dramatic developments, such as the building of the GM assembly plant in Poletown, the basic economic crisis in the city and its satellite cities has not eased.<sup>1</sup>

So much for population decline and social and economic change. The key question for us is what has this to do with politics, particularly the party organizational substructures? How have the Republican and Democratic parties adapted to these radical socio-economic developments? Are they still responsive and relevant mobilization and linkage structures? In 1956 in my basic study of the parties, and in the investigation Dan Katz and I did of the relationship of precinct party organizational strength to the vote, we carefully examined the question of relevance, or impact. Through bivariate and multiple regression analyses we demonstrated conclusively that the precinct party organization played a considerable role in getting out the vote in 1956. In fact, we argued there was a 10.5 percent point difference in the vote attributable to the relative strength of the precinct organizations. (Eldersveld 1964; Katz and Eldersveld 1961).

Table 2. Black Perception of White Attitudes, Detroit 1968-1976.

	1968	1971	1976
According to Blacks (percentages):			
Whites want blacks to "get a better break"	43	28	23
Whites want to "keep blacks down"	23	41	32
Whites don't care what happens to blacks	34	31	45

Table 3. Voting Behavior in Detroit, 1952-1984.

	1952	1956	1980	1984
A. Presidential Elections (% Democratic)	60.2	61.7	78.5	81.0
B. Congressional Elections (% Democratic)				
1st District		84	86	95 90
13th District		65	70	92 87
14th District		53	57	53 59
15th District		67	74	68 60
16th District		61	64	70 64
17th District		47	53	69 N/A*

\*No opposition.

Over the past 30 years the constancy of and, indeed, the increase in the electoral strength of the Democratic party in Detroit is striking (see Table 3). The city was solidly Democratic in the Eisenhower years, and has become even more Democratic in the Reagan years. Other large cities have been showing declines in the Democratic vote for president: Los Angeles 40 percent for Carter in 1980, a 10 percent decline since 1976; New York 55 percent for Carter, an 11 percent decline since 1976. Detroit (like Chicago and Baltimore) revealed a slight increase in Democratic strength actually: 78.5 percent Democratic in 1980 (and 81 percent in 1984). In 1980 there was a 66 percent turnout. The same trend is noticeable in the vote for Congressional districts in Wayne County. Congressmen like Conyers (1st) and Crockett (13th) win with over 80 percent of the vote, while Hertel (14th), Ford (15th) and Dingell (16th), do very well also, improving somewhat over the earlier years. In the 17th district Sander Levin had no opposition in 1984. There is diversity in party strength within the city, however. The contrast between the 14th and 1st districts is apparent. And at the precinct level in 1980, for example, the Democratic vote ranged from 37 percent to 99 percent for the precincts in our study. (In the 1956 study the precincts ranged from 7 percent to 84 percent in Democratic strength.)

This poses three major questions: 1) How has the Democratic party maintained and increased its strength?; 2) How has the Republican party sustained itself in the face of this Democratic strength?; and 3) What have the precinct party organizations had to do with all this? One could argue any of the following positions:

1. The change in the composition and activities of the precinct cadres have been closely linked to the level of public support for the parties; the cadres have been adaptive, functional, competitive, mobilist.
2. The party organizational efforts have been either inconsequential or irrelevant, or both. Due to the populational changes and the "clustering" phenomenon, it was inevitable that Detroit would remain, or become, what it is in terms of political support behavior. At best party organizational efforts reinforced other forces.
3. The party organizational effort was actually dysfunctional became less effective in the 1980s than it was in the 1950s. If the organizations were operating at comparable levels of efficiency today, the Democratic strength would be even higher.

I will attempt in the ensuing analysis to shed some light on the probability that one of these propositions is most tenable.

#### The Precinct Leaders: Composition of the Coalitions in 1956

In 1956 we conceptualized the party organization in socio-economic coalitional terms and empirically identified the major subgroups within the party structures. We analyzed the representational cohesion, their party loyalty, and their ideological distinctiveness. We were concerned particularly with the mutually exploitative relationships between these subgroups and "the party"--the internal tensions that had to be responded to, and also the utilization of sub-groups for mobilization of support. The particular coalitions and subgroups we identified in 1956 are summarized in Table 4 for precinct leaders and loyal supporters in the electorate.<sup>2</sup>

The Democratic coalition was basically composed of four groups: blacks (primarily blue collar workers); blue collar-labor union whites; and a residue of non-labor whites. Of the total, 73 percent were labor union members; 47 percent union actives. Using a nationality breakdown, there were relatively high proportions of Irish (13 percent) and Polish (11 percent) among the precinct leaders. There was a fairly even split between Protestants and Catholics with a very small percentage of Jews (less than 5 percent).

The 1956 Republican leadership coalition also can be seen as consisting of four groups, with nationality again of some utility in making further subgroup distinctions. The four key groups include the business-managerial whites, the blue collar (union member) whites, the blacks (3 to 1 union members), and a "residue" of non labor white collar whites divided between those with German and English nationality backgrounds (plus a small percentage of workers with lower SES who did not belong to unions). The nationality data in the table reveal small percentages of Polish and Irish among Republican precinct leaders, but the Republicans were heavily (70 percent) Protestant. There were no Jews in the Republican coalition.

If one compares these party cadres in 1956 on important social criteria with the census of the population, or with the cross-section survey of that year (Eldersveld 1964:28-30), certain congruences and asymmetries emerge. The blacks are quite well represented in both parties, but important differences existed on other social characteristics (see Table 5). The Republican leadership in 1956 badly underrepresented blue-collar workers was much better educated, and very Protestant. The Democratic leadership on the SES variables of education and occupation was much closer to the population norm. But each cadre had its special nationality interest sectors while, however, appealing to its rival's "natural" constituencies.

Table 4. The Party Coalitions in Detroit in 1956: The Socio-Economic Subgroups.

	Precinct Leaders	Loyal Supporters
A. Major Subgroups (Democrats)		
1. Blacks	23	28
2. Blue Collar Whites	54	48
3. Business-Professional Whites	10	9
4. Other Nonlabor Whites	13	14
	100%	99%
A. Major Subgroups (Republicans)		
1. Blacks	16	9
2. Blue Collar Whites	27	33
3. Business-Managerial Whites	32	22
4. Other White Collar Whites	25	36
	100%	100%
	Precinct Leaders Only Democrats	Republicans
B. By Nationality		
Irish	13	6
English (Welsh, Scottish)	7	24
German	8	17
Polish	11	7
By Religion		
Catholics	47	24
Protestants	44	70
Other Groups		
Women	15	20
Young (up to age 40)	36	31
Union members	73	30
Union actives	47	8

Table 5. Comparison of Party Cadres in Detroit, 1956.

Social Characteristics	Population		The Precinct Leaders
	Democrats	Republicans	
% Black	16	23	16
% Blue Collar (Head of Household)	52	54	27
% No College	84	65	47
Religion			
% Catholic	31	47	24
% Protestant	57	44	70
% Jewish	3	4	0
Nationality			
% English (Welsh, Scottish)	13	7	24
% Irish	7	13	6
% German	13	8	17
% Polish	8	11	7



Table 6. Social Profiles of Detroit Precinct Leaders, 1956-1982.

	Democrats					Republicans				
	1956	1964	1972	1980	1982	1956	1964	1972	1980	1982
Race										
% Black	23	55	65	58	55	16	22	22	31	24
Sex										
% Male	70	55	65	58	52	80	72	61	62	62
Age										
% Below 40	35	40	35	32	25	17	40	34	35	31
Education										
% Some college or above	26	60	50	80	86	51	55	50	87	96
Religion										
% Catholic	47		33	30	24	40	44			
Union										
% Members	60		45	61	30	18	26			

Table 7. Net Change in Black Leadership, 1956-1972.

	Democrats	Republicans
A. In Precincts Increasing in Black Population		+60%
		-8%
B. In Precincts with No Significant Change in Black Population		-4%
		+5%

Changes in the Party Leadership Coalition: The 1980s Compared to 1956

The changes that have taken place in the last 30 years in the Republican and Democratic Party cadres are sometimes striking (Table 6). The progressive increase in the proportion of blacks in the Democratic Party mirrors the shift in blacks in the population. The Republican Party has not really changed significantly over the years, by comparison. Educational levels are very high now, over 80 percent having at least some college, which is far above the population norm. Women have almost reached parity with men in the Democratic Party, but still lag among Republican leaders. Catholics have declined strikingly in the Democratic cadres (to 30 percent), but the Republican proportion is now much higher (44 percent). Hence, today the parties are similar in gender, age, and educational level, while differing basically in terms of race, occupation, union affiliation, and religious preference. There are certain nationality differences also. The Irish have declined to 7 percent in the Democratic cadre (increased to 13 percent in the Republican). The same is true of the Polish, now only 7 percent of the Democrats, but 10 percent of the Republicans. The English and Germans have declined in both parties; the English, for example, are 12 percent of the Republican party now, compared to 24 percent in 1956; the Germans have declined also, from 17 percent to 7 percent.

The extent of organizational adaptation of the Detroit parties to population shifts, by neighborhoods, can be demonstrated by looking at individual precincts. We asked our precinct leaders to inform us of the social characteristics of their precincts, including the proportion of blacks and whites, and whether the population in the precinct had been changing or remaining stable. Thus, we can classify our precincts on the basis of changes in racial composition, and then link this to the characteristics of the precinct leadership. We did a detailed study of these precincts in the early period 1956-1972, when a major shift took place in Detroit's population. We interviewed precinct leaders in the same precincts in 1956, 1964 and 1972. (See Table 7; after 1972 precinct boundary changes have made this type of analysis more difficult.) In 1980 we found that only 10 percent of those precincts that our informants described as predominantly black had white Democratic leadership, but 33 percent had white Republican

leadership. Thus, the differential adaptive responses of the two parties are clearly demonstrated.

#### A Comparison of the Party Coalitions in 1956 and the 1980s

There are a variety of data, obviously, on the basis of which we can conceptualize today's party coalitions. Using a simplified version of the approach we used in 1956, we can describe how the social group complexion of the party structures has changed over time (Table 8). The basic character of the Democratic coalition has clearly been restructured. Whereas it was 73 percent blue collar, it is now, in the 1980s, 22 percent blue collar; whereas it was 23 percent black (primarily blue collar) it is now 59 percent black (primarily white collar); in addition, its business-professional white component has doubled to 23 percent.

The basic structure of the Republican coalition has not changed as radically. Whereas it was 33 percent blue collar, it is now, in the 1980s, 22 percent blue collar; whereas it was 15 percent black (mostly white collar), it is now about 30 percent black (almost entirely white collar); its business-managerial-professional component has remained fairly similar in size over the years. Thus, change has occurred, but there has been no radical restructuring of the coalition. The differences between the two parties in their basic coalitional revitalization patterns may in fact reveal a great deal about the relative success of the parties in the past 30 years.

Table 8. Comparison of the Nature of the Party Coalitions in Detroit, 1956-1984.  
(Data for Precinct Leaders.)

	1956	1980	1982	1984
Major Groups (Democrats)				
% Blacks	23	58	52	59
% Blue Collar	(81)	(18)	(12)	(19)
% Blue Collar Whites	54	11	10	11
% Business-Professional Whites	10	14	23	23
% Other Nonlabor Whites	13	16	15	7
N	138	152	100	54
Major Groups (Republicans)				
% Blacks	16	31	23	36
% Blue Collar	(39)	(23)	(0)	(0)
% Blue Collar Whites	27	14	7	9
% Business-Managerial and Professional Whites	32	23	48	20
% Other White Collar Whites	25	31	22	36
N	143	66	44	45

Note: Those "not in the labor force" are included in the above categories. The percentages varied greatly: 8 percent for both parties in 1956, almost 40 percent in 1980. This includes housewives, retirees, students, and unemployed.

Table 9. Attitudes and Orientations of Precinct Leaders for the Subgroups in the Party Coalitions, 1956-1984.

	Democrats				Republicans			
	Blacks		Whites		Blacks		Whites	
Years:	56	80-84	56	80-84	56	80-84	56	80-84
1. Ideology: % liberal on civil rights and medicaid/Poverty issues (averages)	77	85	60	52	66	76	49	19
2. Party Loyalty: % disapproving of ticket splitting	56	38	33	11	27	0	35	16
3. Organizational Morale: % satisfied with decisional status	22	34	39	28	5	30	15	39
4. Aspiration Level: % willing to take more responsible job	63	80	53	68	74	87	56	73
5. motivations (current): % whose issue concerns and community obligations are primary motivations	3	7	4	11	4	7	16	26

Note: Because of the small size of some of them samples, particularly in the 1980s, and the small N's of subgroups as the coalitions changed their character, we have for this analysis only used the basic distinction between the whites and blacks.

#### Political Orientation of the Coalitional Subgroups

Clearly the social profiles of the party cadres have changed as the socioeconomic character of the population has changed, although there appears to be more social "adaptation" by the Democratic structure. The next question is whether there has been attitudinal change manifested by those precinct leaders, and in what directions. We have selected five types of orientations which were operationalized fairly similarly in the 1956 survey and also in the surveys of the 1980s. We present the data over time for these orientations, but restrict the analysis to blacks and whites (primarily because of the small size of the samples; Table 9). These data are useful for understanding the subgroup's pattern of attitude change over time, and also the extent of consensus/dissensus in the party at two time points. Two types of questions should be addressed: 1) have the blacks (or whites) in the Democratic (or Republican) precinct cadres become more or less liberal; and 2) is there more or less ideological "distance" between the blacks and whites in the party structures today, compared to 1956?

Table 10. "Ideological Distance" (Blacks and Whites; in percentage points, using average liberalism scores).

	(On Civil Rights Issues Alone)			
	1956	1980-1984	1956	1980-1984
Democrats	17	33	42	51
Republicans	17	57	26	70

On ideology, the data document the increased tension within both parties, with the blacks more liberal today than in 1956 (when they were already quite liberal) and the whites declining in liberalism. The two key questions for which we have comparable over-time data are in the civil rights and Medicaid/aid for the poor policy areas. The "ideological distance" within the parties between blacks and whites has significantly widened today (Table 10). Clearly if ideology was salient and dominant one wonders how these structures could cohere. The viability problem is different for the Democrats, of course, since almost two-thirds of their leaders are black (almost all liberals), while 70 percent of the Republicans are whites (only 20 percent liberal). Yet, structural consensus would appear in jeopardy for both parties.

Fortunately, in neither party over the years has the motivation for involvement rested on ideology; i.e., a primary interest in party work as an opportunity to work for causes and influence policies. While such has been a major reason for initially becoming active (65 percent of the Democrats and 70 percent of the Republicans saying influencing the policies of government" was "very important" for initial entry), it is not, and never has been, the primary current satisfaction or motivation. In the 1980s, as previously (Table 9), issue concerns and impersonal, philosophical motives constitute the primary motivation for less than 10 percent of the Democratic leaders and less than one-fourth of Republicans. Social contacts and friendships were mentioned in 1956 as aspects of party work they would "miss most" if they had to drop out of organizational involvement. This is on balance still true in the 1980s, but we do find a significant difference today between blacks and whites in both parties in the incidence of reference to social gratifications. For the blacks in both parties are still basically "socializers" (at the 60 percent to 70 percent level, compared to almost 80 percent in 1956), while among whites in both parties only 30 percent are admitted "socializers" (compared to 72 percent for the Democrats in 1956, and 40 percent for the Republicans in 1956). Among whites there is more ambivalence in motivations recently and somewhat more disillusionment. Many of these leaders see the party in pragmatic and personally instrumental terms (including building a career in politics) rather than perceiving party work as rewarding in ideological terms.

Yet, one must notice the high aspiration levels of these activists. In the Republican party as well as in the Democratic these precinct leaders want to stay in and move up. In fact, the amazing finding is that about 70 percent of the whites in both parties aspire to higher party positions, a proportion larger than in 1956. This suggests durability in these precinct cadres, real commitment, as well as upward mobility pressure. As we know from previous analysis, such a pattern of organizational dynamics is associated with higher levels of efficiency in task performance, especially in getting out the vote. We shall discuss that relationship a little later in this paper.

Linked to aspiration is the state of organizational morale; i.e., the extent of satisfaction with one's decisional status in the party. The data reveal much the same pattern today as in 1956--a minority of these leaders is really satisfied. They want more "say." Using the same two questions at these two time points ("How much say do precinct leaders like you have?"; "Do you think precinct leaders like you should have more say...?"), we find actually somewhat more satisfaction in the 1980s than in 1956. But from 60 percent to 70 percent want more recognition and a greater role in the organization.

While aspiration is up, party loyalty is down. Admittedly our indicator of this is open to question--whether the respondent approves or disapproves of ticket splitting. The assumption is that the loyal partisans will disapprove of splitting the ballot in order to vote for an opposition party candidate. After all, these are precinct leaders! The data in Table 9 reveal a consistent drop for all subgroups in this type of loyalty. In fact, among Republicans perhaps only 10 percent disapprove of ticket splitting (of course, in 1956, only a third were loyal, in this sense--the Republicans always approved of ticket-splitting in Detroit!). The Democratic blacks were, and are, the most loyal activists, but they too have declined in loyalty, from 56 percent to 38 percent. Other data corroborate this decline. For example, in the list of motivations for becoming active, "party loyalty" (or a desire to help the party) is one type of motive used. In 1956, 53 percent said this was "very important," while in 1980 only 30 percent took this position.

An additional measure we used in the studies in the 1980s only underscores the relatively low level of partisan strength of black precinct leaders. We asked, "How

strong a partisan would you rate yourself?" (We use an 8-point scale ranging from "very strong" to "very weak"). Table 11 shows consistent and striking differences. In neither party is there as great a sense of strong party attachment by blacks as by whites. Caution should be used in drawing inferences from this, especially for level of party activity. Black activists may be as effective as before, but the "party" attachment context of such performance may have declined in relevance.

We emerge from this analysis with a clearer picture of what is going on within the two party structures today, and we can see this in historical perspective. There is much continuity--in motivational orientation, in ideological distinctiveness, in aspiration level, in desire for more meaningful involvement. If anything, tensions on ideology are greater, but the inherent pragmatism of these leaders mutes the disharmony, apparently. These are also signs of some change, most disturbing perhaps in the degree of party loyalty, especially for blacks (depending, of course, on which measure of this one employs).

The images one secures of the two parties diverge considerably. The Democrats have developed dramatically into a party dominated by blacks, much more white collar in occupation, much less Catholic, still rather union affiliated. It

Table 11. Percent in Upper Two Scale Positions on Partisan Strength.

	Democrats			Republicans		
	1980	1982	1984	1980	1982	1984
Blacks	45	57	49	38	50	45
Whites	61	60	60	88	78	84

Table 12. The Level of Local Party Activity in Detroit, 1956-82. (Percent of Precinct Leaders Reporting Activity)

	Democrats			Republicans		
	1956	1980	1982	1956	1980	1982
<b>A. Specific Activities:</b>						
Voter Registration	93	42	38	80	19	21
House to House Canvassing	46	60	57	32	61	46
Election Day Roundup of the Votes	68	69	74	80	62	63
<b>B. Number of Hours Spent on Campaign Work Per Week</b>						
Up to 10	--	41	36	--	53	58
11 to 20	--	19	22	--	18	17
Over 20	--	40	42	--	29	25
<b>C. Summary:</b>						
Performed All 3 Critical Tasks	17	30	26	25	16	21
Performed 2 or 3 Tasks	38	35	28	22	34	21
	55	65	54	47	50	42

appears to be a dynamic organization of aspiring, pragmatic activists who have distinctly liberal priorities on issues. Though the organization has changed its coalitional character, basically it appears to be a viable structure in terms of

activists' orientations (despite the decline in party loyalty). The Republican structure has not changed fundamentally in composition, certainly not in racial composition, nor in some of the orientations of the activists. It consists, surprisingly also, of a set of aspiring pragmatic leaders similar in many respects to the Democrats. The Republican whites are just as conservative as ever, if not more so, and there is greater ideological dissensus than before. It is as limited in party loyalty as ever, if not more so. What is surprising is the apparent maintenance of the Republican organization as a relatively aspiring and relatively dynamic structure, continuing to confront an increasingly dominant black Democratic organization. The Republican organization's focus must be on county and state politics.

Table 13. Campaign Activity Performance for the Party Subgroups, 1956-1984. (As Reported by the Precinct Leaders)

	DEMOCRATS						REPUBLICANS					
	Blacks			Whites			Blacks			Whites		
	56	80	82-4	56	80	82-4	56	80	82-4	56	80	80-4
A. % Time Spent on the Campaign Per Week:												
Over 20 Hours	-	42	43	-	23	24	-	26	31	-	22	24
11-20 Hours	-	16	14	-	18	17	-	22	16	-	11	9
Total Over 10	-	58	57	-	41	41	-	48	47	-	33	33
B. % Involved in Campaign Activities												
House to House Canvassing		50	73	44	54	17	45	24	36			
Activity Index*												
High Level of Activity on the 3 Critical Tasks		72	60	44	26		27	33	24	42		

\*Note: Includes for 1956 and 1980 three types of activities: registration, canvassing, and election day "round up" of the voters. In 1956 giving advice to constituents and in-between election year activities were included.

The Level of Campaign Activity Today. Compared to 1956

The major question remaining is, how effective are these organizations in the 1980s in mobilizing the vote and maintaining contact with the public? Are they as relevant for party support as previously? Unfortunately we have not been able to do what we did in 1956; that is, secure census-type data for each individual precinct which permitted us to test with a regression model the power of the precinct organization, holding other precinct characteristics constant, in getting out the vote. We can, however, present data on the activities of the precinct leaders in recent elections, comparing such task performance for the white and black subgroups in the parties.

As we can see from Table 12, the types of campaign activity engaged in have changed over the years. Voter registration drives are much less frequent, but canvassing activities have increased in both parties, and election day activities have increased in the Democratic party. These are the "critical tasks," if a local party organization is to truly function in a campaign. On all these "critical tasks" there is clearly no real diminution in effort by these activists in either party; 50 percent or more are performing at least two of these three critical tasks today, compared to 47 percent (Republicans and 44 percent (Democrats) in 1956. Thus, as noted previously, there is indeed "organizational slack: in the Detroit parties today, but no more so than 25 years ago.

How do the subgroups in each party perform today, compared to 1956? Table 13 presents these data. We do not have perfectly comparable indices, yet the data are similar enough to see the longitudinal patterns. In both parties, blacks are working more hours per week in campaigns today than whites. And the extent of house to house canvassing is greater in the 1980s than three decades ago--the differential for blacks is again particularly noticeable--a 23 percent increase for Democratic blacks (only 10 percent for Democratic whites), and a 28 percent jump for Republican blacks (compared to 12 percent for Republican whites). While the overall indices show a drop in total level of activity over time for blacks (although the indices are not perfectly comparable), the overall activity level of Republicans has increased. This suggests that these structures continue to be operative today at equivalent levels of task performance or, to put it another way, they are no more "minimal level efficiency structures" today than they were previously.

The orientations we found associated with high levels of activity in 1956 were aspiration for a higher position, party loyalty and organizational morale. We found these same orientations to be linked to activists' level of efficiency in 1980. For example, even though party activists' level of efficiency in 1980. For example, even though party loyalty is lower today it is still a relevant variable--61 percent of the Democrats who were loyal to the party in 1980 were highly active, as were 55 percent of the Republicans (compared to only 30 percent and 34 percent respectively of those who were not strongly loyal to their parties). We find, further, that politics is more confrontational in ideological terms in 1980, with the liberals more active among Democratic activists and the conservatives somewhat more active among the Republicans.

#### Conclusions

The Democratic Party cadres in Detroit have experienced a considerable transformation in racial and socio-economic characteristics in the past quarter century. This has been much less true of the Republican Party cadres. These changes have occurred in response to changes in the composition of the population and in the social and economic environment. If we examine closely the coalitional character of the two parties over time we can see both the continuities and the transformations that have occurred within the party structures. While the social group structure of the coalitions changed, the basic political directions of the city have been continued. In fact, the Democratic Party support is greater than ever before. There is strong evidence in our analysis to suggest that the adaptations of the Democratic party structures at the base of the system have been largely responsible for this continuity in party control, in the face of extreme change in the socio-economic system.

In democracies party structures, in order to be viable, must fulfill certain key requisites: continuously attract and respond to social groups; maintain a cadres of motivated activists who enjoy organizational work; command the "identification" and loyalty of these activists; a high level of activity during election campaigns and in between elections; cadres which are genuinely combative, ideologically and functionally. Not all structures meet these five requisites perfectly; there is less activity than ideally we should have, less loyalty than one would hope, much ideological ambivalence, and motivations which are often not well sustained or rewarded.

In Detroit today, as in 1956, these requisites are met apparently adequately enough to produce relatively dynamic party structures, with the same majority party-minority party imbalance today as in the past. As the Democrats have become more dominant over the years in Detroit, their adaptive party cadres have proved the necessary infrastructure for that development. And to the extent that the Republicans have maintained themselves in Detroit as the minority opposition party, despite their inability to adapt as effectively as have the Democrats, their party cadres have provided that base of 20 to 30 percent public support. The differential adaptation, plus the continual revitalization of the old party structures, are then the key elements in understanding party development in Detroit from the 1950s to the 1980s.

1. Much of the above argument can be found elaborated by Bryan D. Jones and others in Detroit, *An American City*, the Michigan Quarterly Review, Spring, 1986.

2. See Eldersveld 1964:79-86 for the full set of data on the coalitions.

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